

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BACK TO SCHOOL

By Sarah Lee, OAGC President



I can't believe that the time has finally come to write my farewell message as president of the OAGC. It truly has been an honor to lead this organization for the last two years. When I accepted the nomination for president-elect, I never anticipated that Covid-19 would change everything just two months later. My entire presidency has been one for the record books, as it was shadowed by so many changes during the pandemic. We were able to come together as an organization to face and overcome many challenges.

Although those challenges were many, there were also many successes to celebrate both at the forefront and behind the scenes. As an organization, we were able to come together and embrace virtual meetings and to host virtual conferences during the pandemic. There were many incredible professional development opportunities as we moved to the virtual conference format. The success of the Teacher Academy as a virtual conference and the ability of more teachers to participate have led us to continue the virtual format in 2022, as well. We were able to move to a hybrid model for the Annual Fall Conference in 2021, and I know that many were relieved to be able to see and connect in person, even with the restrictions in place. Despite all the changes, we still were able to provide access to some of gifted education's most expert presenters and to provide the high-quality professional development that the OAGC is known for.

The organization remains a strong presence on the Ohio Department of Education's Gifted Advisory Council and continues to provide input and feedback to state leaders and to advocate for our gifted learners. The OAGC successfully finished the production and recording of the Responsive Learning (formerly GT Ignite) modules toward the 60-hour professional development guidelines. We have now moved toward new courses for those needing additional maintenance hours. We are excited to continue working with Responsive Learning to provide high-quality gifted PD to educators not only in Ohio but throughout the country.

Of course, the OAGC continues to follow current issues and challenges and to monitor their potential effects on gifted education. The organization also has advocated during State Board of Education meetings to ensure that funding levels and legislation reflect the standards and quality that we expect for gifted education in Ohio. None of our successes would be possible without the collaboration of our board members. Our goals as an organization are accomplished through the teamwork of the Governing Board members, and I would like to express my gratitude to each individual for their commitment to the OAGC.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Suzanne Palmer, OAGC past president, for all her support and guidance throughout my presidency. A big thanks as well goes to Ann Sheldon, our executive director, for all her patience and support. It has been a true eye-opening experience working so closely with her to carry out the mission of the organization these last two years. I would be remiss not to mention Kay Tarbutton for all that she does to support the president and the OAGC.

I am honored now to join the past presidents who have served before me and paved the way for gifted learners through their strong advocacy and dedication. I have appreciated their guidance and encouragement, and I hope to set the same example as I hand the presidency to Heather Kardeen. It has been a pleasure to work alongside Heather on the OAGC Governing Board, and I know that the organization is in good hands. Finally, I thank each of you for your confidence in me as your OAGC president the last two years, and I look forward to continuing to serve the organization as past president. I wish all of you a wonderful school year!